

Quarterly Progress Report

Project Name: Parker Mountain Sage-grouse

Utah State University Project Control Number:

Period Covered: July 1 to September 30, 2003

Project Investigators: David Dahlgren and Terry Messmer

Agency Contract Number: 020225

Submitted to: Dean Mitchell, Upland Game Coordinator, UDWR

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Narrative:

Hens and broods were followed through the rest of the field season (May to August). Two hens died during brood rearing activities. All other hens raised successful broods. July vegetation data was taken on the experimental plots. Rabbit exclosure data was taken in July and August.

Bird dog counts started in July after all collared hen's broods and random broods had full flight capability to avoid adverse impacts from the dogs. No grouse were harmed by dogs during the bird dog surveys. Bird dog surveys were done by one or two investigators walking transects within the experimental plots with one or two dogs. Four transects were walked per plot by one investigator and one dog. 'Reflushes' were not counted when researchers could reasonably tell it was the same bird. Spike treatments had the most bird use for both overall counts and brood counts. All treatment plots had higher counts than control plots.

Pellet counts were done within each plot with three transects per plot. Transects were walked and sage-grouse pellets counted with distance to centerline and nearest edge recorded. Pellet counts were done at the end of the field season (mid-August) to allow the most use possible for that field season. Spike treatments had the highest pellet counts and all treatments had higher counts than the controls.

In July there was a PARM meeting with most members attending. Summer work to that point was reported. Many issues were discussed. The transplant that took place last fall from Parker Mountain to Gordon Creek WMA near Price, Utah was reported by the lead UDWR biologist on that project. So far minimal mortality has occurred. Rick Baxter, BYU research assistant gave a presentation on the transplant of hens to Strawberry Valley during the spring of 2003. The transplant in the first year was a success. Data

will continue to be reported to PARM as further transplants are expected. We took a field trip after the meeting to see the latest Dixie harrow treatments above Parker Lake Pasture (Chicken Springs area).

A DWR flight was conducted to find missing collared hens. The flight was unsuccessful for the most part. Signals were not coming through very clearly that day and we had a hard time picking up known bird signals. The flight ended early.

Next quarter we anticipate another PARM meeting to report some of the summer's data. Also, we'll discuss future transplants of sage-grouse off Parker Mountain. This is scheduled towards the end of July.